The Ballad of Amos Kendall
(to the tune of Davy Crockett)
Lyrics by Michael Turney
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C Up in New England when the F nation was C young
Amos was born as G a farmer's son.
C His pa said learning was F a great G tool
And insisted that Amos go to C school.
Amos, Amos C Kendall, what will he G grow to C be?

C The lending library gave him F lots to C read;
Helped to meet his ed- G u-ca-tion needs.
C It wasn't enough; he still F craved G knowledge,
Went off and worked his way through C college.
Amos, Amos C Kendall, a Dartmouth G grad-u- C ate.

C Despite his strong spirit and F forceful C thought,
Of physical strength G Amos had nought.
C Skinny and pale, he was F oft-times G ill
And his hands shook as if he were C chilled.
Amos, Amos C Kendall, a hy-po- C chon-dri- C ac.
After graduating he thought it best
to gather his things and move out West.
Way out there was less competition.
Much better hope of a good position.
Amos, Amos Kendall, hoping to find success.

Traveled by flat boat and stagecoach, too.
Walked a lot before he was through.
It took many months but he was plucky
Made it all the way down to Kentucky.
Amos, Amos Kendall, on the western frontier.

Teaching and tutoring his bills to pay,
Taken in by a family named Clay.
Henry Clay was important in these parts,
Knowing this family gave Amos his start.
Amos, Amos Kendall, meeting important folks.

He lived at Ashland to teach Clay’s children
And read the law books in Henry’s den.
He passed the bar for the Commonwealth,
Then moved to Georgetown seeking wealth.
Amos, Amos Kendall, trying to practice law.
Wasn't long 'til he had a change of heart
Decided to make a newspaper start.
The Georgetown Patriot was its name
And Amos loved the editing game.
Amos, Amos Kendall, writin’ and printin’ news.

When Kentucky politics got very tense
Amos' newspaper helped it make sense.
His forceful pen and press had pow–er;
His editorial voice really flow–ered.
Amos, Amos Kendall, speaking out forceful–ly.

Frankfort was home to another publication
Serving much of the western nation.
Called the Argus and widely read,
Amos was asked to be its head
Amos, Amos Kendall, gaining a stronger voice.

After Amos moved he met his sweet Mary.
Wasn't long until they did marry.
Four little Kendalls soon did fol–low.
Then her sudden death left him hol–low.
Amos, Amos Kendall, a grieving widow–er.
Just a few years later he met Miss Jane,
A teen-age lass who eased his pain,
They were soon wed and their family grew.
In a short while, he had quite a crew.
Amos, Kendall, father of fourteen kids.

'Bout this time Andy Jackson came along
Saying government was going wrong.
Amos agreed so he pitched right in,
And helped the General's White House win.
Amos, Kendall, backing the president.

After the election he went to D. C.
And got a job with the Treasury
Fourth Auditor is what he became
When he gave up the newspaper game.
Amos, Kendall, a Washington bureaucrat.

Balancing budgets and managing spendin'
Many would think is never-ending
But, not content doing just these tasks
Amos would do whatever Jackson asked
Amos, Kendall, serving the president.
When Jackson brought down the U. S. Bank
Amos was there in the very first rank.
He recruited banks throughout the land
Lining up those who would make a stand
Amos, Amos Kendall, stopping the national bank.

When problems arose in the postal service,
President Jackson didn't get nervous.
Postmaster general Amos became,
And Barry's mess quickly tamed.
Amos, Amos Kendall, Jackson's fix-it man.

Amos wrote speeches and drafted big plans;
Was primary aide to the grand old man.
He helped in shaping Jacksonian views
And, at the same time, often made news.
Amos, Amos Kendall, speakin' for the president.

Launching the Globe was another major test,
One of those things Amos did the best.
Jackson's praise this paper did sing,
Set him apart from the Calhoun ring.
Amos, Amos Kendall, facin' intra-party strife.
Some say he was a press secretary.
I don't think he was that ordinary.
With his influence, power and say,
Government policy he could sway.
Amos, Amos Kendall, advising the president.

For years and years Amos used his clout;
Of his influence, there is no doubt.
Though some disliked this elitist smartypant,
He helped build the Democratic Party.
Amos, Amos Kendall, political organizer.

Martin Van Buren was the next in line;
Amos expected him to do fine.
Helped Van Buren win his election
And thus kept his White House connection.
Amos, Amos Kendall, serving a new president.

By eighteen-forty Amos had enough;
Advising presidents was too tough.
Needed money for his family
And he was worn out physically.
Amos, Amos Kendall, lookin' to make a change.
He left the White House and post office, too,
Not really knowin’ what he would do.
Tried another newspaper for a spell;
Didn’t work out terribly well.
Amos, Amos Kendall, seeking a better path.

Amos had encountered a man named Morse,
Founder of the tele–graph, of course.
Morse’s invention just wouldn’t pay,
‘Til Amos helped him find the best way.
Amos, Amos Kendall, managing a business now.

He got rich making tele–graph expand
Sending its message across the land.
Then he decided to spread his wealth,
Gave to churches and those in ill health.

One contribution still exists–day,
Helps deaf folks in a marvellous way.
With Gallaudet, he founded a college
Where hearing–impaired acquire knowledge.
Amos, Amos Kendall, promotin’ learning for all.
A wealthy old man with important friends,
Amos spoke his mind on current trends.
Civil war loomed, states set to secede;
Amos wrote that they ought not proceed.
Amos, Amos Kendall, defending the U. S. A.

He loved the Union, but not Mr. Lincoln.
Thought we were on the verge of sinking.
Wished Andy Jackson was still in town
So he could knock the rebellion down.
Amos, Amos Kendall, worried about the future.

Amos and the country came through the war,
The Union saved and united once more.
Alas, though Amos survived the strife,
Disease had claimed his second wife.
Amos, Amos Kendall, grief-stricken once again.

From humble beginnings he climbed the tower;
From print shop to the seat of power.
Sat in the cabinet, advised presidents,
Then laid out where the telegraph went.
Amos, Amos Kendall, lived the American dream.
Amos passed away in eighteen-sixty-nine,
Finally at the end of the line.
Today most folks don't even know his name,
That is truly a terrible shame.
Amos, Amos Kendall, forgotten American.